

Arguments Used to Support Colorado Springs City Council's Provision of Health Benefits to Domestic Partners

November 11, 2002

Argument 1: The measure is fiscally prudent.

Answer 1. The measure is not "fiscally prudent." If someone had proposed increasing real marriage benefits by the same dollar amount as it is going to cost to create these same-sex benefits, it would have been voted down because the city can't afford it. From a fiscal point of view, now is the worst possible time to do this. The budget is tight and getting tighter. However, our current fiscal condition does not change the fact that it would not have been fiscally prudent to do this even in the best of times because homosexuals are a high-risk health group (driving up premiums the city will pay for everyone), especially compared to married people, who are the healthiest group in society.

Argument 2: Don't we want to increase the number of people in the community with health care coverage?

Answer 2. The blanket goal of "extending health care coverage to more folks in the community" could be used to justify coverage for anyone. What about coverage for grandparents, cousins, aunts, uncles, grandchildren, and ex-spouses of city employees? Wouldn't this help extend coverage to more folks in the community? Moreover, the Council's ordinance does not increase the number of people in our community with coverage because homosexuals are typically high-income and will have health care coverage even if they don't get it through the city. The issue isn't one of extending health care coverage further, but of which relational ties should be recognized as familial by government.

Argument 3: Homosexuality shouldn't preclude health care coverage, just like other wrong behaviors (lying, cheating, swearing) shouldn't preclude coverage.

Answer 3. The comparison with the list of other wrong behaviors is misleading. The argument is that, since using bad language wouldn't preclude someone from having health coverage, homosexuality shouldn't either. This is an erroneous argument. To begin with, homosexuals who are city employees already get coverage. Their homosexuality does not preclude coverage for them, just like other particular vices would not preclude coverage for them. The question is not what vices preclude someone from coverage, but who has a right to coverage in the first place. It is not the case that the "spouse" of a homosexual is "precluded from coverage" because he/she is living in sin. To be precluded from coverage, one has to be entitled to coverage in the first place, and non-married partners (regardless of their level and variety of vice) have no such entitlement, just as parents, grandparents, cousins, uncles, and aunts have no such entitlement. The argument presumes the entitlement exists already (i.e., presumes homosexual relationships are equivalent to marriage), and that the only reason it is being opposed by many is because they think the particular vice of homosexuality should preclude coverage. In reality, the question is rooted in the nature of humanity, marriage, family, and sexuality, and in the history of the legal treatment of such things in Colorado Springs. It has nothing to do with who is committing which vices.

Argument 4: A vote by a Council member in favor of this ordinance does not mean he/she personally endorses homosexual behavior.

Answer 4. The ordinance publicly legitimizes homosexuality, whether Council members

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personally endorse the behavior or not. It creates legal recognition for a relationship that has never been legally recognized before, and elevates homosexual relations to the same legal plane as marriage—the foremost goal of the nationwide homosexual movement.

Argument 5: The New Testament Gospels and the example of Christ require us to forgive and show compassion to homosexuals.

Answer 5. There is nothing in the Gospels (or any other book of the Old or New Testament) that supports the idea that Christ's ministry of forgiveness and grace requires legal recognition and endorsement of homosexuality (or any other vice). Indeed, the purpose of Christ's ministry was to separate people from their sin, not to encourage them in it and provide legal recognition for it. The New Testament word for the latter is not compassion or forgiveness, but lawlessness. In the words of Christ's foremost apostle, Paul of Tarsus, "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not!" (Romans 6:1) Paul also specifically condemns homosexuality (and many other specific vices) in Romans 1. The Bible everywhere restricts lawful marriage to one man and one woman. There is no precedent in the history of Christian teaching to support the Council's move.

Argument 6: The Hippocratic Oath, taken by physicians, requires us to be compassionate toward all men, and even criminals are guaranteed health care coverage.

Answer 6. The Hippocratic Oath relates to the art of medicine, not the art of government, which is why statesmen take a different oath from doctors when they assume office. Mixing or combining the function of the physician with the function of the statesman is a confusion typical of the modern welfare state.

Even so, there is nothing in the Hippocratic Oath to support the Council's move. Both the classical and modern versions of the Hippocratic Oath relate exclusively to preventing or healing disease, and the decorum and courtesy associated with the right use of medicine. Encouragement toward "warmth, sympathy, and understanding" as well as confidentiality by the physician are used exclusively in this context, and nowhere imply the indulgence of vice or toleration of behavior that undermines health. Indeed, given the health implications of homosexuality, the Hippocratic Oath would seem to more clearly oppose the Council's move than support it. Also, in redefining what constitutes marriage away from the way God has defined it, we would also appear to have violated the Hippocratic prohibition against "playing at God."

The implication of the second argument is that, since felons are guaranteed health care coverage by the government, everyone should be guaranteed such coverage. This is an argument for socialized medicine and a confusion of genuine human compassion with government largesse.

Argument 7: The duty of statesmen to attend to the "health, safety, and welfare of the community" requires them to pass this measure.

Answer 7. Along with the Christian ethic and the Hippocratic Oath, the duty of statesmen to care for the "health, safety, and welfare of the community" also opposes this move by the Council. As politically incorrect as it is to say, homosexuality is a health risk to both the individual and the community, and legal recognition of it in no way advances the welfare of any community, including the homosexual community.

DISCLOSURE OF LOBBYING ACTIVITIES

Approved by OMB
0348-0046

CONTINUATION SHEET

Reporting Entity: _____

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Letter to Colorado Springs Gazette on City Council Decision on Domestic Partners

Nov. 8, 2002

The decision by the City Council on Wednesday to extend marriage benefits to same-sex partners of city employees is an ominous one for our city and our state. To date, Colorado Springs had held out against this trend in Colorado cities (Aspen, Boulder, Denver, and Glendale) toward legal recognition of homosexuality, preserving an important precedent for people across our state interested in preserving historical ideas of gender, sexuality, marriage, and family. That precedent is now gone.

We are all familiar with the debate. One side says marriage is simply a social construct of men, and should not discriminate against homosexuals, just like it should not discriminate against minorities and women. The other side says gender, sexuality, marriage, and family exist by design, are unique and have an inherent dignity and honor, and preservation of society and a sound public ethic require legal protection of them.

For these reasons, prior to developments in Europe and North America in the late 20th-century, no civilization in history had placed homosexuality on an equal plane with heterosexual marriage. Homosexual relationships, in general, are not monogamous (even monogamous ones are generally short-lived), they produce no children, and they undermine both public and individual health.

Homosexuals have and should have the full individual rights that all other individuals enjoy. But they do not have the right to legally legitimize behavior that is destructive to society. This is a decision our city will regret for years to come, and should be one voters keep in the front of their minds when they elect a new City Council in April.

Dave Schultheis
State Representative
House District 14

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